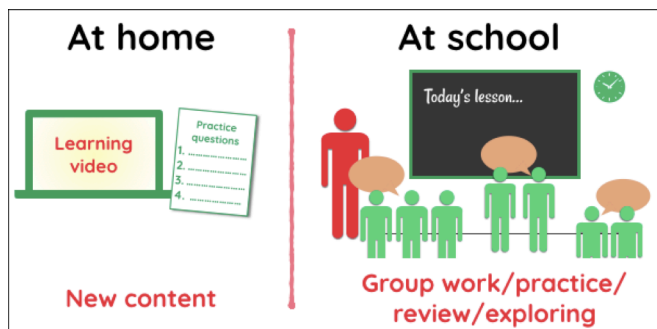


Flipping your classroom

How it works:

In a flipped learning lesson, students learn the content at home (possibly through watching a video, doing a reading, listening to a podcast episode...) and complete a question sheet to guide the learning. When they come to class, they have the foundational knowledge of the topic, and are ready to engage more deeply in the content.



At home:

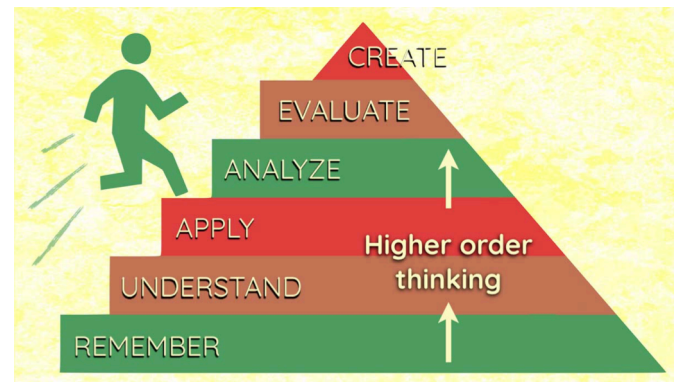
Students should cover the new content by themselves. It's common for flipped learning teachers to assign a video for students to watch, which could be a video the teacher found online or one they created themselves. Alternatively, other materials such as news articles, blog posts and even just textbook sections can be valuable tools for self-study. The assignment usually includes a brief question sheet, which provides a focus for students while using the material.

In school:

After doing the self-study tasks at home, they come to class with the foundational knowledge of the topic. Class activities used to engage more deeply in the content might include role-plays and skits, creating information pamphlets, making a public service announcement, or anything the teacher feels will work. It's a great opportunity to get creative.

Why use it?

According to Bloom's taxonomy of learning, remembering facts is at the lowest rank thinking.



As teachers, our goal is get students climbing those steps to reach higher order thinking. Flipped learning takes care of the “remember” and (hopefully) the “understand” step before students even get to class, allowing teachers to design activities in class that get students really “sinking their teeth” into the content.

Flipped learning teachers...

- ...encourage deeper thinking.
- ...are true facilitators of learning.
- ...are far more than a “walking textbook”.

Flipped learning students...

- ...access higher order thinking.
- ...engage more in the content.
- ...enjoy the learning process.
- ...learn more efficiently.

Does it really work?

Research suggests that flipped learning methods result in significant improvements in attainment, but that research is currently very limited, and usually only one well-known case of its full implementation is cited. At the very least, flipped learning is a fantastic new tool to add to the arsenal of teaching techniques that all good teachers possess, but at best, it is a paradigm shift in pedagogy that is transforming how we think about classroom education.

Ultimately, the only way to find if it works for you and your students is to try it for yourself.



How do I make videos?

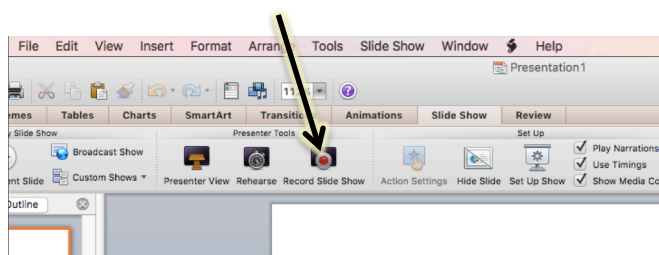
Making your own videos is **not** essential because there is so much content available online. However, if you do want to make and publish your own content, it is very easy.

All you need is a laptop/PC, presentation software (MS Powerpoint or Apple's Keynote) and a microphone.

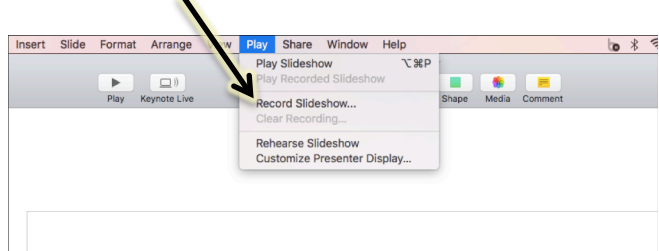
Microsoft Powerpoint/Keynote

First create your presentation (or take one you have already created), and rehearse it. Next, record and narrate it. Exact instructions vary depending on which version of the software you have, but will be something like this:

MS Powerpoint: Click the "Slideshow" button and then "Record Slide Show".



Keynote: At the top click on "Play" and then "Record slideshow..."



Live

Another easy and fast way to make a video is to aim your smartphone at your whiteboard and record yourself drawing, writing or annotating something on the board. If you need something to stand your smartphone on you can get a camera tripod (cheap on Amazon.com) and attach the head of a selfie-stick to it, which your smartphone clips into.

Tips

- Use an external microphone if possible, not a laptop/smartphone's built in microphone. It makes a BIG difference in sound quality.
- Don't repeat things in your video. Students can pause and skip back if they need to.
- Keep it short: aim to keep videos to around 3-5 minutes in length.
- Don't worry about saying "erm" and "er" as natural speech contains these and they sound fine. Keep them to a moderate minimum, however, as they can become distracting if over-used.
- Publish your videos on Youtube but share via a class blog. Youtube videos have "ugly" web addresses so they're hard to share in class. It's easier to put the link on your blog.

Addressing criticisms about flipped learning

"Students can't ask questions when doing the learning task."

This is true. But how many chances do they get to ask questions during in-class presentations? With flipped lessons they can watch and re-watch videos at their own pace to find answers, and can come to class ready ask questions if necessary. What's more, there are more discussion opportunities to address problems in a flipped learning lesson.

"Students that don't do the pre-class task will be excluded from the learning."

This is true, but it's also true of homework in traditional classrooms. Some students will do assigned work and others won't. This is a problem as old as teaching itself, and this is what discipline/intervention policies are for.

"What if there is no Internet access at home, or students use the excuse that 'my connection wasn't working yesterday?'"

It's important that the learning resources are available in school. Most schools have ICT labs or other student-access computers, so students without a computer at home can do the work in school (assuming the activity is an online video). It's advisable to give at least two days to do the homework task, with the instruction: "It should be complete as homework *today*," so students who have internet access problems have the opportunity to come in the following day and access the resources in school.

"There are fewer assessment for learning opportunities."

Short-term assessment for learning (i.e. assessing where the learners are at so you can see if you need to modify the next activity, or your next lesson) can be more challenging in a flipped learning lesson: the students spend the vast majority of the lesson in peer-to-peer discussion. However, teacher monitoring is far easier as there are plenty of discussions to listen in on. In addition, the question sheet provided with the pre-class task gives teachers a chance to see how the students are doing right from the first minute of the lesson. Using plenaries as micro-assessment sessions as well as exit-slips can be helpful ways to assess what is needed for next lesson. Assessment for learning will likely change structure in a flipped learning setting, but it won't be limited.

"It takes too long."

Assuming a teacher already has a presentation (which they would often have to make anyway), narrating it and converting it into a video is a 5 minute job after a little practice. There are also millions of educational videos already available for free online, and you probably won't struggle to find suitable content to meet your learning objectives. Don't forget that the pre-class task can sometimes be as simple as answering 5-10 question by reading a section in the textbook.

